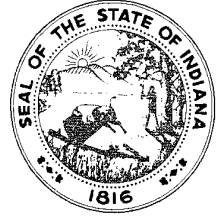


State of Indiana Commission for Higher Education



101 West Ohio Street, Suite 550

Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-1971

(317) 464-4400

Stanley G. Jones, Commissioner

FOR RELEASE MARCH 13, 1998

CONTACT: Stan Jones or Ken Sauer
317-464-4400

COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TAKES ACTION TO MAKE “VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY” A REALITY FOR HOOSIERS

In a major step to increase distance learning opportunities for Hoosiers, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education voted today to join Western Governors University (WGU), the nation's most ambitious “virtual university” offering learners educational opportunities through technology.

Degree programs offered by the “virtual university” will be fully competency-based--requiring students to demonstrate competencies instead of accumulate credit hours--making degrees offered by WGU especially appealing to non-traditional students. For example, a student who has worked for several years may be able to demonstrate a significant number of competencies required for a WGU degree. Other means by which a student may have acquired competencies include independent study, military training, employer-sponsored instruction, life experience, or traditional classroom-based instruction. Indiana's membership in WGU enables Hoosiers to take competency tests at a discounted rate.

For competencies not yet mastered, WGU will operate a web-based “SmartCatalog” identifying courses offered via distance technology by colleges, universities, and non-academic providers around the world. As a participating state, Indiana postsecondary institutions will have the opportunity to market their distance education courses to WGU students world-wide.

“Joining forces with WGU has many benefits, but perhaps the most important,” according to Commissioner Stan Jones, “is what our state will learn about distance education from participating.”

Indiana will become the seventeenth state to join the initiative, which incorporated in January 1997. Western Governor's University will begin offering an Associate of Arts degree and an Associate of Applied Science in Electronics this summer, with additional degree programs becoming available in the near future.

To further expand distance learning opportunities for Hoosiers, the Commission also enacted a streamlined distance education approval process. The policy guarantees that the Commission will review new Indiana distance education programs within 60 days. The policy also outlines that degree programs must be accessible through one or more forms of electronic technology including the Internet, computer program, CD Rom, video tape, audio tape, television, radio, and/or print correspondence.

The new approval process was used to authorize ten new distance education degree programs. The new degree programs include three masters, two baccalaureate, and five associate degree programs to be offered by Ball State University, the University of Southern Indiana, and the Terre Haute campus of Ivy Tech State College.

Although other Indiana public colleges and universities have offered degree programs via distance education for several years, this marks the first time that the University of Southern Indiana and Ivy Tech State College have been authorized to offer degree programs via technology.

A complete list of existing and newly approved degree programs is attached. For additional information, please contact the Commission for Higher Education at (317) 464-4400.

DEGREE PROGRAMS OFFERED BY INDIANA PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
VIA DISTANCE EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

March 13, 1998

Programs Approved at the March Commission Meeting:

Ball State University	A.S. in Business Administration M.A.E. in Elementary Education M.A.E. in Special Education M.A. in Executive Development for Public Service
-----------------------	--

University of Southern Indiana	A.S. in Communications B.S. in Nursing B.S. in Health Services
--------------------------------	--

Ivy Tech State College (Terre Haute)	A.A.S. in Accounting A.A.S. in Business Administration A.A.S. in Design Technology (CAD)
--------------------------------------	--

Existing Degree Programs:

Indiana University (IUPUI)	M.S. in Nursing T.C./A.S. in Histotechnology
----------------------------	---

Purdue University (West Lafayette)	M.S/M.S.E. in Electrical Engineering M.S/M.S.I.E. in Industrial Engineering M.S/M.S.E. in Mechanical Engineering M.S/M.S.E. in Interdisciplinary Engineering
------------------------------------	---

Ball State University	A.A. in General Studies B.S. in Nursing (completion program for Registered Nurses) Master of Business Administration
-----------------------	--

Indiana State University	A.S. in General Aviation Flight Technology B.S. in Human Resource Development B.S. in Electronics Technology* B.S. in General Industrial Technology* B.S. in General Industrial Supervision*
--------------------------	--

*Presently offered at Vincennes University and Ivy Tech State College
campuses and postsecondary centers

WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY

Western Governors University was formed in 1997 as a result of the interest of the governors of the western United States to share higher education distance learning resources. WGU's mission is to expand educational opportunities for learners everywhere, offering courses from a wide array of sources. Educational access will be provided to a dispersed population of students who might not otherwise have access to higher education and to those needing workplace training. WGU serves three areas:

1. **Competency-Based Certifications and Degrees**, which will be awarded, not based on an accumulation of academic units or credits, but rather on a mastery of competencies demonstrated by assessments. WGU will design the competency specifications for industry certifications and academic degrees, and will map courseware supplied by third parties to those competencies. WGU will also offer a full range of student services. WGU will offer initially two degree programs: Associate of Arts and Associate of Applied Science with emphasis in Electronics Manufacturing Technology.

2. **Corporate Training Programs** based on an employee's demonstration of competency. WGU will offer its expertise in designing definitions for learning outcomes and in developing competency-based assessments. WGU will also offer to administer the progression of employees through these training programs.

3. **Brokered Courses and Degrees through WGU's Open College** where WGU will offer students traditional courses from education providers and a full range of support services, effectively serving as a value-added broker. Educational providers will contract with WGU to list educational content in the Open College through WGU's SmartCatalog/Advisor.

WGU is a non-profit corporation with offices with business offices in Salt Lake City, Utah and academic offices in Denver, Colorado.

A fourteen-member Board of Trustees governs WGU and is chaired by Governor Mike Leavitt of Utah and Governor Roy Romer of Colorado. The states and territories participating in Western Governors University are Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. It has exchange agreements with Canada, Mexico, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Further information about Western Governors University is available from Jeff Edwards, Director of Marketing at 801-575-5358 or at the Web site of the Western Governors Association: <http://www.westgov.org/smart/vu/vu.html>